



# The CHARLESTON REPORT

## *Business Insights into the Library Market*

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### Mark Your Calendars!

*... A special update for TCR readers from Katina Strauch (Founder, Charleston Conference) and Leah Hinds (Executive Director, Charleston Hub)*

The **2021 Charleston Conference** will take place November 1-5. We are planning to have an in-person event in lovely historic Charleston, SC. The Gaillard Center, Francis Marion Hotel, and Marriott Courtyard are expecting us, and the South Carolina Aquarium is booked for 2021. We have missed the city, the camaraderie, and the networking that make Charleston special. We will also have a virtual component based on our attendance last year (a record 3,000) which was very popular.

Watch for our call for preconferences and papers which will be announced shortly. Sign up to receive the latest news and announcements by creating an account at <https://www.charleston-hub.com/membership-account/membership-checkout/> and clicking "Information about the Charleston Conference." As usual our overall focus is book and serial management including threads on analytics, collections, library services, administration, scholarly communications, technology, and more.

And please NOTE: We have merged **Charleston Conference** content with **Against the Grain** on our new website **Charleston Hub** — <https://charleston-hub.com>. We are taking nominations for this year's theme so send suggestions please! <[leah@charlestonlibraryconference.com](mailto:leah@charlestonlibraryconference.com)>

Happy New Year and here's hoping for a great 2021.

### TCR Reports from the Field: Academic Publishing in Europe (APE), January 12-13, 2021, Berlin, Germany

*... Reported by Anthony Watkinson, Principal Consultant, CIBER Research and Honorary Lecturer, University College London, <[anthony.watkinson@btinternet.com](mailto:anthony.watkinson@btinternet.com)>*

APE is the first conference in the European scholarly communication year and, unlike most of them, presents views from all stakeholders. This was the original aim and some librarians are involved but now it is essentially a publishing meeting and indeed a meeting of STM journal publishers. That being said, it is an outward looking meeting. The conference series was partly owned and inspired by former Springer Director Arnoud de Kemp who last year handed APE over to a new charitable organization — the Berlin Institute for Scholarly Publishing <http://www.stm-publishing.com/important-announcement-about-the-future-of-ape/>.

The theme in 2021 was **The NEW FACE OF TRUST** and the blurb ends with this claim: *2021 is the start of a very new and very different period in history and we come together with purpose and a collaborative spirit.* What this meant in practice was the speakers were concerned with **how to make Open Access work**. Arnoud de Kemp again convened the program committee this year. I shall select those sessions likely to be of interest to **TCR** readers. The content was rich. For the whole picture see <https://www.ape2021.eu/full-program/program>.

The conference was of course virtual. The provider of the platform was Morressier, a German start-up. The recording can be purchased by those not able to attend for fifty euros — check this out at <https://ti.to/ape2021.eu/ape2021>. Part of my task is to inform readers of what is in the recording so that you can see if it is worth accessing.

1. The **first keynote** was by top German computer scientist Professor Dorothea Wagner. It was on the very timely question: **Open and Autonomous. The Basis for Trust in Science**. I could not hear her talk, however, she has sent me her slides so I can report. Her starting point was what the pandemic has taught us. How can the system of science be made more resilient? How can science contribute more to the resilience of societies? She based her talk on a survey and ended with the conclusion that *"a public discourse on the purpose of academic publishing is needed."*
2. Fortunately the **second keynote** was pre-recorded by Lauren Kane who is President of the Society for Scholarly Publishing (SSP) and chief strategic officer for Morressier. Her presentation was concerned with **Reinvention or Return to "normal."** It was a good survey of the main decisions demanded in scholarly communication. She sees Open Access as not the same as "equitable access" and also considered how APCs can be replaced. In addition, she examined the expanding research life cycle with the value of such outputs as data formerly in grey literature, and finally gave a riff on the purpose of (U.S.) learned societies

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now faced with the “need” to take political action for the first time. In her view **decisions that had to be made by learned societies under Covid were expedited and resilience was demonstrated.** Experiments were undertaken — examples were given. Most important was science in society — sometimes for the first time — which indicated the need for more openness in the future. Her conclusion pushed for reinvention.

3. Frank Vrancken Peeters complemented the Kane keynote. He is the CEO of the second largest STM conglomerate — the English-German Springer Nature. The Dutchman spoke from his home in the Hague rather than from corporate HQ in Berlin. He emphasised **openness, particularly Open Science, as better for research, for society and for the economy;** how the transition would be achieved through transformative agreements: the importance of partnerships and collaboration; why open access has to be gold; and how all this related to the United Nations sustainable development goals (SDGs).
4. The introduction to the first panel **Restoring Trust in Published Research** has not yet been recovered for the recording but the discussions of the panel, mainly made up of researchers, are available. The discussion centred on **whether peer review should be after “publication” (the preprint model) or after publication (the traditional journal model).** Dr. Remco Hessen from Australia claimed that peer review does not supply the quality assurance it says it does and from the other corner Dr. Deborah Sweet from Cell Press in Cambridge MA suggested that in good journals the conclusions are indeed supported by data. She added that this is what researchers themselves believe — citing <https://senseaboutscience.org/activities/peer-review-survey-2019/>. Anne Scheel from Eindhoven supported Hessen. Trust in peer reviewed publications is
5. A topic of growing importance in a world of open access — **gold publishing funded by author publishing charges (APCs)** — was explored by a panel comprised of Andrea Powell, the publishing co-ordinator of Research4Life, and three African researchers. The basic problem is that researchers from the Global South cannot afford to pay to go OA. **How do you create a level playing field?** African countries are different one from another: they are not a bloc. Therefore some concentrate on local training and others on waivers. There is also the problem of the status of local journals and the attraction of predatory journals which can be confused with the former. For an overview see <https://www.elsevier.com/icsr/perspectives/equitable-transition-to-open-access>.
6. This session was complemented by the following panel moderated by Liz Ferguson of Wiley — **Open Access and the Value of Selectivity.** Here the problem was that some journals need to charge more than others. **Selective journals are those that have high costs because they have tough peer review standards which result in a high level of rejection.** The first speaker was an active researcher, Lynn Kamerlin of Uppsala. She expressed researcher views clearly and after serious thought and consultation. How do she and others choose where to publish? Rigorous peer review is really important. **Open access mandates are here to stay.** It is now clear that the system, under which APCs are paid for by researchers, is not sustainable. She hopes selective journals are not lost but how can they be financed? Bernd Pulverer of the European Molecular Biology Organisation (EMBO) represented journals which had a ten per cent selection rate. He has long argued at the difficulties EMBO has with **fitting in with funder mandates.** He explained why his researcher-led refereeing processes are so expensive. Alison Mudditt of Public Library of Science (PLOS) followed. Her remit as CEO at PLOS was to **achieve sustainability for selective journals where quality has been achieved and recognised.** Transparency in new business models is essential. The model was the community access publishing program which can be seen on the PLOS site: <https://plos.org/resources/community-action-publishing/>. Finally James Butcher of Springer Nature gave a **more philosophical background to the open access strategies of the Nature journals,** noted for their high level of editorial input. They could also be thought of as newspapers for which communication is vital. Some recent initiatives can be found at <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2020/11/24/nature-add-open-access-publishing-option-2021>. Some of the solutions to a real problem

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*The Charleston Report* is written for publishers, vendors, product developers, merchandisers, and wholesalers who are interested in expanding their library market. Readers will gain insights in effective marketing to libraries, early alerts to library trends, access to library leaders' future plans, library budget projections, library strategic plans, technology directions, and publications needs.

For comments and contributions, contact Rebecca Lenzini, <rlenzini@charlestonco.com>, Editorial Offices, 6180 East Warren Avenue, Denver, CO 80222. TEL: 303-282-9706, FAX: 303-282-9743, (c) Copyright 2021, The Charleston Co. All rights reserved. ISSN 1091-1863.

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“misplaced.” Better by far is to crowdsource preprints — see the new policy of the prestigious publisher eLife: *Our goal is to exclusively review papers that have been posted as a preprint and we intend to make this a requirement for being reviewed by eLife in the second half of 2021.* Other panelists concentrated on improving research methodologies in animal experiments — see <https://www.nc3rs.org.uk/dr-nathalie-percie-du-sert> — or pressing for the proper use of preregistration from the editor of Nature Human Behaviour at <https://www.cos.io/initiatives/registered-reports>.

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presented are recognised and understood by funders but not all. There was a discussion session which is available.

7. **How the OA Switchboard is building a cost-effective collaborative Infrastructure Solution for an OA-driven scholarly Communications Landscape.** The second day began with a lucid explanation of this important development by former subscription agent Yvonne Campfens, now the executive director of OA Switchboard. **Open is better for science and democracy needs facts.** The challenge is multi-lateral arrangements. People say how expensive it is to make a transition. Other industries collaborate in infrastructure which saves money and encourages trust. You need to have an independent player to do this and there is no legal barrier to this sort of arrangement, she says (OA Switchboard is registered in Europe). How does it work? It is a **hub working behind the scenes for the key players in the academic ecosystem — funders, research institutions and publishers.** Note that she did not mention libraries. Presumably they are the relevant part of the institution. She did mention consortia. OA Switchboard is not a database but is enabling communications between stakeholders: there is an API. Standards have been agreed upon already. Library interests in privacy and confidentiality are fully recognised. The **software is open source and it is license-free.** To understand fully one clearly needs examples of the “working solutions” — see <https://www.oaswitchboard.org/>. There are launch partners — founding partners. These include the American Physiological Society and Berghahn Books.
8. The next session was convened by Dr. Manuela Gerlof, who is in charge of HSS publishing at local publisher De Gruyter, and also Dr. Andreas Degkwitz, the director of nearby Humboldt University Library in Berlin (of note, Dr. Degkwitz is also a Charleston Conference attendee and part of the Program Planning Group for the Fiesole Retreat Series). The session was about **Collaborations based on Trust** with special reference to the **humanities and social sciences.** I felt that the U.S. was ahead in this area and there was little to learn. The chairs did not see open access books taking off without stakeholder collaborations and there was an additional need due to digital humanities of new digital infrastructures. Dr. Kamran Naim explained the “Subscribe to Open” model, an alternative to APC funding. It works for books as well as journals. To understand fully one clearly needs examples of the “working solutions” — see <https://scholarlykitchen.sspnet.org/2019/04/02/subscribe-to-open/>.
9. Other presentations included a useful review of the **state of play in monograph publishing** as described by Ros Pyne of Springer Nature: *“The monograph — so central to AHSS scholarship — has been slow to move into a digital environment, but things are starting to change. Arguably the most exciting opportunity afforded by this shift, though, is the possibility of open access for monographs. This talk explores recent developments in monograph publication and provides some insights into a recent collaborative venture in support of OA for books — the OAPEN OA Books Toolkit.”*
10. Of general (urgent) interest was a session on **Climate Action. Influencing Policy and Tackling Real-world Challenges.** How can scholarly collaboration support rapid action? Under the guidance of Dr. Liz Marchant, who runs a portfolio of life, earth and environmental sciences for Taylor and Francis, speakers pointed to **relevant work done on the theme of the conference as it can impact United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.** This is practical stuff relating to what might seem somewhat theoretical. Lewis Collins, editor of the journal *One Earth*, explains what publishers can do. It was concerned with challenges rather than disciplines. Joanna Depledge, former editor of *Climate Policy*, examines the interface between Science and Policy. Governments are involved in facing up to the climate change literature through this journal. The third speaker, Andrew Kelly, also a publisher, brought further research to the table. There is a press release pointing to an open access publication at <https://newsroom.taylorandfrancisgroup.com/study-reveals-disconnect-between-researcher-ambitions-and-reality-in-achieving-un-sdgs/>.
11. **Balancing the Need for Rapid Sharing with the Need for Rigorous Evaluation – the Role of Preprints and Peer Review.** This is one of the big topics for publishers and researchers at the present time which is why so much space has been given below. (For some discussion in the context of peer review see above at section 4.) The conference organisers allowed for a second bite of the cherry in the shape of a panel under the moderation of Magdalena Skipper, the editor-in chief of Nature. Preprints have gained traction among biomedical researchers in particular in recent years since the founding of Biorxiv by Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory Press and accelerated under the pressure to get out Covid results as quickly as possible. For Skipper **peer review is the norm that we love to hate but cannot do without.** There was first a round of statements followed by questions and a discussion — not commented on here. Follow up on specific points can be done by using Google. Professor Chris Jackson at Imperial College represented researchers. He has set up a preprint server himself — eartharchiv — which does not attract the sort of concern which Covid preprints attract. How we optimise preprints is what we should talk about. **Preprints and open peer review could exist together.** Theo Bloom of BMJ, a long-time editor, talked about Medarxiv which is growing very fast. She is a co-founder. **How do you prevent users from treating the content as if it was peer reviewed?** They have risk mitigation in the shape of hoops to go through. All preprints are checked by a clinical editor and any problems escalated to the leadership group. It is sometimes said that preprints should only be shared among the research community but she does not agree. Sowmya Swaminathan heads editorial policy on research integrity for Nature research journals and there is now a corporate policy based on the importance of visibility through preprints which can also accelerate take up of these new results and build on them — progress in knowledge. Authors are helped to move to peer review and also to outreach: the **Research**

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Square platform is used. There is a high degree of transparency using open peer review. **Preprints are shifting the status quo: registration and dissemination is uncoupled from certification.** Thomas Lemberger at EMBO discussed **review comments before journal submission.** He works with about 70 journals. The reviews are portable. Authors can attach reviews to their papers but only 30% do. Automated curation methods making knowledge graphs enable self-organisation. The last statement was from Rebecca Lawrence of F1000Research who was asked to talk about post-publication peer review. However she did raise one additional point. The ability to share findings is allowed and no problem with editorial balance is inserted to prevent it. Her general argument was that **links between preprints and the peer reviewing article speeds the process and avoids wastage.** For her checks are done before preprints and direct peer reviews are done transparently. The data is also fully examined. **For F1000Research the publication is the preprint.** Society needs the complete peer review history and they provide it.

## Don't Miss This!

*The Charleston Advisor's* January 2021 issue (v.22, no.3) is now available in print and online at [www.charlestonco.com](http://www.charlestonco.com). Included in the current issue are the following reviews:

- Advance: A SAGE Preprints Community (SAGE Publishing)
- Applied Science and Technology Source Ultimate (EBSCO Information Services)
- Bloomsbury Architecture Library (Bloomsbury Digital Products)
- BMJ Best Practice (BMJ Publishing Group)
- Food and Drink in History (Adam Matthew Digital)
- Global Environmental Justice Documentaries (Face to Face Media)
- MEDLINE Complete (EBSCO Information Services)
- OECD iLibrary (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development)
- ProQuest African American Heritage (ProQuest)
- Reading Like a Victorian (Victorian Serial Novels)
- Wharton Research Data Services / WRDS (The Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania)

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